Vocabularies of Citizenship and Gender

The Danish Case

Siim, Birte

Publication date:
1998

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

TEXT NO. 6

VOCABULARIES OF CITIZENSHIP AND GENDER: THE DANISH CASE

BY
BIRTE SIIM

THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME GENDER, EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICS
1998

Birte Siim
Vocabularies of Citizenship and Gender:
The Danish Case

GEP WORKING PAPER NO. 6
Design: Gitte Blå
Lay-out: Joan Vuust
Print: Kopicentralen Aalborg University, 1998

ISSN: 1397-7903

GEP WORKING PAPERS present publications from the research programme: Gender, empowerment and politics. The programme, which is financed by the Danish Social Science Research Council, was started in the autumn of 1996 and lasts until the year 2000.

GEP WORKING PAPERS can be bought from:
Joan Vuust, Department of Development and Planning, Fibigerstraede 2, DK-9220 Aalborg Ø
phone.: +45 96 35 84 32, fax: +45 98 15 32 98, e-mail: joan@i4.auc.dk

Contents

Vocabularies of Citizenship and Gender: The Danish case

Birte Siim

Introduction

The dominant political discourses and academic debates about the welfare state and democracy in Denmark have not explicitly been framed in the language of citizenship. The key words in the discourses about the welfare state and democracy have been social equality, solidarity and universality, on the one hand, and self-organisation and participation on the other. Since the 1980s the political discourses and academic debates have been changing, and during the 1990s it became clear that a new political language has been introduced. Increasingly the terms of marginalization and integration of disadvantaged groups of citizens are used in political discourses, and there is a growing academic debate about active citizenship and about increasing the influence of citizens on the welfare state.

In the post-war institutional Danish welfare model, the principle of *universality* in social policy has been established as a citizen based right independent of income financed through direct taxes. The Social Democratic discourse about the welfare state was challenged by the economic crisis and by the high rates of unemployment in Denmark, and from 1982, by a political shift from Social-Democratic to Centre-Right governments with a new political discourse about 'modernisation' and privatisation of the public sector.

The new Social-Democratic-Centre government, in power since 1993, has introduced a political vocabulary that in some policy areas represents a break with the old social democratic discourse about social equality and universality, and in other areas has been interpreted as a new inclusive solidaristic discourse. During the same time there has been economic recovery followed by a decline in the unemployment rate from 12 per cent in 1992 to about 8 per cent in 1997. The present debate about restructuring of the welfare state and about the rights and duties of citizens is controversial and contradictory. The discourses on the one hand emphasise new rights of

citizens as users of welfare services as well as new rights of workers and the unemployed in relation to the temporary leave schemes. On the other hand new obligations of the unemployed and persons of social assistance connected with their 'activation' in paid work are stressed.

The article looks first at key words in the Danish discourse about citizenship from the perspective of gender. Secondly, the focus is on three concrete examples of the present debate about citizenship and their implications for gender relations. They each touch upon key areas of citizenship related to citizens as parents and workers, areas that are also central to feminist discourses, and they illustrate the contradictory mix of neo-republicanism, social-liberalism and feminist-communitarianism in the Danish language of citizenship. Finally, the article discusses the future challenges to citizenship in Denmark and the need to develop a new feminist vision about gender equality.

The discourse of social equality and universality

The Danish democracy is built upon a long tradition of "consensus democracy" and peaceful co-operation between social forces as well as upon a discourse of integration of disadvantaged social groups. Democracy was established peacefully "from above" in 1849, when the vote was given to all men, and the women's vote was gained peacefully in 1914, only 8 years after it was adopted as a demand by Dansk Kvindesamfund [Danish Women's Society], the National Women's Rights Organisation.

Denmark was industrialised late, and the transformation from an agrarian to an industrial economy took place from 1880 till 1960 (Esping-Andersen 1985). The building of the Danish welfare state was influenced 'from below' by class organisations of workers, small landowners and the agrarian middle classes, and the farmer's party. Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti [the Liberal Party], has played, and still plays, an important role in the political development (since the last election it has actually become the second biggest party).

In Denmark the principle actors in the development of social equality and a universal welfare state were the Social Democratic Party in close co-operation with det Radikale Venstre [the Radical Left] a centre party representing workers, small landowners and teachers. Recently it has been argued that the Danish welfare model was developed by a unique mix of voluntary welfare agents in civil society, the parties, especially the Social Democratic Party, and local as well as the central government (Kolstrup 1997).

Feminist scholars have generally had a positive interpretation of the Scandinavian Social Democratic welfare states: The language of social equality and universalism has usually been regarded as favourable to women, whereas the language of paternalism and corporatism has been described as a barrier for women's full citizenship (Hernes 1988; Siim 1988; 1997). The question is what have been the implications for women's citizenship of the alliance between Social Democracy and Radicalism in Denmark?

The mix of Liberalism, Radicalism and Social Democracy

The relatively high degree of consensus and *pluralism* in the political culture[1] is connected with the social organisation and cultural emancipation of peasants in the nineteenth Century as well as with the social movements of the workers in the twentieth Century. In terms of political citizenship ideas of self-organisation and participation are central elements in the political culture with roots in the farmer's and worker's movements as well as in the political discourses of Liberalism, Radicalism and Social Democracy (Østergård 1992).

The key words in the political culture are *community* and *self-organisation,* and the positive perception of voluntary organisations [frivillige foreninger] in civil society[2] transcends the different political discourses. The communitarian tradition is crucial to the Social Democratic project of social equality and universalism as well as to the Danish version of a "consensus democracy" [det samarbejdende folkestyre]. The communitarian tradition values the *horizontal* aspects of citizenship, i.e. the activities and responsibilities of citizens towards their fellow citizens

The term democracy, and indeed politics, is defined broadly to include both the family, civil society and the workplace, and the dialogue between citizens is seen as the central aspect of communication on all these arenas[3]. In the social - liberal tradition, freedom and autonomy of the individual have often been perceived within a context of the local (agrarian) community and the organisations in civil society, rather than within the context of the private property of the bourgeoisie.

There is a relatively strong, independent humanitarian tradition for the advancement of civil and sexual rights connected with the small, but influential, Radical Party. Danish radicalism has since the 1930s combined a language of civil, social and political rights with a high degree of liberalism in sexual and reproductive issues, for example abortion rights and homosexual rights, and a strong antimilitarism. During the 1970s and 1980s, Nuclear Power and the Environment

became key issues, and the small Party, which governs with the Social Democrats, has played a key role in the political debate about the moral responsibilities of individuals in social policy.

In the discourse of social democracy there has been a tension between value of self-organisation 'from below' and the principle of *corporatism*. In Denmark, corporatism refers both to the incorporation of the dominant class organisations in the state, as well as to a broader notion of the influence of citizens' groups on public policies. Corporatism has combined paternalism with the male norm of waged work (Finneman 1985), and centralised male-led class organisations have played a dominant role in these politics. The Danish Social Democracy Party has always been a minority Party, and it has been difficult for Danish women to organise independently within the Party (Dahlerup 1979).

I suggest that the unique Danish mix of liberalism, radicalism and social democracy in the political culture has in general been favourable both for the social integration of women and for the formation of alliances between women from different classes. Women's organisations have a long tradition of political networks and alliances, for example, the successful alliance between the National Women's Rights Organisation and women in the working class movement to campaign against protective legislation in 1900 and 1911 as well as against the attempts to limit married women's wage work during the 1930s (Ravn 1996)[4].

The changing political discourses during the last 30 years

From the perspective of social democracy, the last 30 years represent a continuity in the Danish political discourse based upon the expansion of the universal welfare state. From the perspective of gender, they also represent a shift in the perception of equality as gender equality became the norm. The expansion of the public service sector has been followed by a growing individualisation in legislation and by a gradual institutionalisation of the dual-breadwinner model (Siim 1997).

Since the Social Act of 1976, social legislation has been premised on a high degree of *decentralisation*[5] in the responsibilities for social issues from the central to the local state as well as on a high degree of *individualisation* of the rights and duties of citizens. Today women, as well as men, have a double right - or obligation - to work and having to care [6], and, with a few exceptions, the individual, not the household or the family, has become the primary unit in social policy (Koch-Nielsen 1996).

Since 1973, the high unemployment rate in Denmark has divided the political discourse between Left and Right. The Left, The Social Democratic Party and the Socialist People's Party, has advocated an active labour market policy to combat unemployment, while the Right, i.e. the Conservative and the Liberal Party, has given priority to Neo-liberal inspired economic policies of balancing the budget. During the 1980s, the two small centre parties, the Radical Party and the Centre Democrats, have supported the social policies of the Left and the economic policies of the Right. From 1982 to 1992, the Radical Party was in government with the Right, and since 1993, with the Social Democratic Party, which is still the biggest and most influential party (with 62 out of 179 places in Parliament in 1997).

From 1982, the Conservative-Centre took over the Government after the Social Democrats, and during the following ten years the key words in the Right discourse were *privatisation* and *modernisation* of the public sector. The Danish economist, Bent Rold Andersen (a former Social Democratic Minister of Social Affairs), has shown that the intention of reducing the size of the public 'caring' sector was not effective. Instead the number of public employees in health care, child-care and caring for old people actually rose (Rold Andersen 1993). One reason for this was the existence of a political consensus about further decentralisation of social services, for example in relation to care for the elderly where new rules were established to enable the elderly to stay in their private homes with the public support of locally based home help and nurses. Another reason was a political consensus between the Left, Social Democrats and the Socialist People's Party, and the Right about improving the conditions for families with young children. This resulted in an expansion of the number of child care institutions as well as an adoption of universal child benefits, what feminists have called the 'caring dimension'[7] of the welfare state (Knijn & Cremer 1997, Siim 1997).

The discourses of class, gender and citizens

From the perspective of gender, the meaning and practice of citizenship in Denmark has changed as women have become integrated in the labour market as well as in politics. The shift from a male breadwinner to a dual breadwinner model during the 1970s was followed by a political consensus about ligestilling [gender equality] and an increase in public responsibility for the provision of places in child care institutions in the 1980s (Jensen 1994, Siim 1997). Cross-partisan alliances between female politicians in Parliament played an important part in this new gender contract (Dahlerup, 1993). The radical changes of gender relations in the labour market and in the family were followed by feminist demands for access to the public arena (Christensen & Knopp 1997, Siim 1994a; 1997).

Paternalism in the old organisations based on class was challenged during the 1970s and 1980s by the New Left discourses of emancipation and self-organisation with roots in the new social movements, especially the environmental movement, the peace movement and the women's movement. During the 1980s the political initiatives shifted to the Right, but the big trade union organisations, like the unskilled workers, the iron and metal workers, the blue collar workers, and the all-women organisation of unskilled workers, remained relatively important actors in the defence of the welfare state. Women became increasingly unionised, and the organisations of public employees like the nurses, social workers and teachers, all dominated by women, moved to the Left and mobilised against cuts in social benefits and services.

The general decline in the political participation of workers and citizens was followed by a rise in women's political mobilisation and participation, both at the grass root level and at the elite level (Christensen and Knopp 1997). *Gender equality* [ligestilling], which in the Danish political discourse is different from *social equality* [lighed], gradually became part of the political vocabulary of social democracy (Borchorst 1997). The national agency for equal opportunities, the Danish Equal Status Council [ligestillingsrådet] was formed administratively by the Social Democratic government in 1975 (and by law in 1978). Gradually *state feminism,* based upon the mobilisation of women 'from below', and expressing the institutionalisation of equality policies became the official political discourse (Dahlerup 1993).

During the 1980s, cross-party alliances among female politicians were the driving forces behind legislation on child care as well as behind quotas in relation to public boards and committees (Christensen & Knopp 1997; Siim 1997). The Committees Act (from 1985) and the Boards Act (from 1990) both relate to equality in the appointment of women and men in public boards and committees, and they have visibly managed to increase women's representation in public bodies (Borchorst 1997;18). The Danish and Swedish histories both show that in spite of the under-representation of women in the corporate channel, Scandinavian corporatism has been open to change[8] (Bergquist 1994).

A new language of citizenship

Since the 1990s the welfare state has been under transition and a new vocabulary of citizenship has been introduced. This often expresses contradictory trends and is open to conflicting interpretations. I have selected three political debates that have raised key questions relating to citizenship: a) the citizen involvement in service-provision, b) the temporary leave schemes, and c) the "activation" of the unemployed, people on social assistance and the young. They represent

both a continuity and a break with the former discourses of democracy and social equality. User-participation is a new form of democratic citizenship related to everyday life, the temporary leave schemes represent an expansion of the rights of citizen-parents, whereas the rules about activation have introduced new obligations for the unemployed, the young and for people on social assistance. What then are the implications of this new vocabulary for gender equality and for the integration and empowerment of marginalised groups?

Participation of citizens as users in service-provision

In the Danish welfare state issues of public service provision have become increasingly important, because most citizens are dependent on the public sector for service provision for older people, children, disabled people and people with mental health problems. During the 1990s, the former discourse of decentralisation has been coupled with rules that increase the influence of user groups on public policies. As a result, parents have become one of the most active groups of citizens that participates both informally as well as formally in the governing of schools and child care institutions (Andersen et.al. 1993).

The debate about the new roles of citizens as users of social services has pointed towards two strategies that were both tried out in the 1980s: *Exit* that increases the possibilities for consumer choice by privatisation of social services of health care, education and day care, advocated primarily by the social-liberal discourse, and v*oice* that increases the participation of citizens in the governing of social services by creating boards with joint representatives of users, managers and employees. *Voice* has become the main strategy (Torpe 1992).

During the 1990s, decentralisation of social services has been combined with a new *institutionalisation* of the participation of users in relation to schools (from 1990) and child care institutions (from 1993), and from 1997 it became mandatory to establish councils for the elderly (Nyseth & Torpe 1997). In Danish there is a distinction between the term *brugere* [users] of service provision, *consumers* in the market, and *clients* dependent upon welfare benefits. The user is a citizen with formal rights and obligations, and the term is closely connected to the public sector and to the system of universal services in relation to schools, child care institutions, and hospitals.

Denmark has a tradition for pluralism in education and public support of *friskoler* [free schools], i.e. private schools which can be organised according to religious, pedagogical or political principles. This meant that primary schools became a logical arena for trying out the new principles of user influence. From 1990, a new statute replaced the former school councils

with governing bodies that have been given greater authority to decide things for themselves, and where parents' representatives, elected for 4 years, always make up a majority[9] (Torpe 1992:10).

In day nurseries there has been a tradition of extensive co-operation between parents and institutions, for example through joint councils. From 1993 a new statute was enacted for nurseries which gave parents a majority of seats in the new governing bodies.

The major political parties have supported the principle of "user-participation" although with different arguments. The primary objective was to make the public sector more *efficient* by producing more and better services without increasing costs. Another objective has been to increase the *autonomy* of citizens, and to reduce the distance between citizens and public authorities. The double aim of the decentralisation of primary schools has been to increase the autonomy of the schools as well as the formal influence of parents as citizens-users in the running of the schools. Opposition has come mainly from the unions of the public employees, because teachers have feared that the influence of parents will challenge their status as professional experts.

The academic debate has focused on the meaning and implications of user participation. From the perspective of *empowerment*, it is asked whether participation actually increases the influence of parents? From the perspective of *social equality*, the question is if there is a real democratisation, or whether it is still the middle class who is the most active group? From a *gender* perspective, the question is whether the participation in the new boards will decrease the former influence of women in the small[10] democracy compared to men? And finally from the perspective of *democracy*, the question is whether participation will increase the fragmentation of citizenship, because the users are encouraged to identify with "particular institutions", and not with "the common good".

Results from the Danish investigation of citizenship (from 1990) have confirmed that generally citizens are actively involved in issues concerned with everyday life and they participate in social service provision. In terms of the *efficacy* of citizens, the participation of citizens proved to be remarkably high, and citizens felt that they had good possibilities to exert an influence (Torpe 1992). Hoff concludes that Danish schools and day care institutions are "open and participatory institutions" defined through a combination of active users and institutions receptive to the demands of citizens (Hoff 1993; Siim 1994a).

User participation in school boards has not, however, increased social equality of participation. In relation to *formal* participation, the difference between people with high and low education was more pronounced in the field of nurseries and schools than in general. Parents'

participation in relation to the schools take two forms: *Formal* participation directed at the level of the school boards, which is less inclusive, and *informal* participation directed at the level of the child, which is *inclusive* (Nyseth & Torpe 1997;253). Adding together the two forms of participation in relation to schools, parents' participation is high and expanding for all social groups.

From a *gender* perspective, the investigation has shown that motherhood, and indeed parenthood, has become a potential for active citizenship, and, in contrast to other countries motherhood is no longer a barrier for political participation in Denmark (Siim 1994a). Research has confirmed that active users among parents tend to be more active in other fields of politics than other parents (Torpe 1992;24). There is gender equality in participation in relation to schools and child care institutions, although women participate less than men in *formal* participation (Siim 1994). Formal participation tends by itself to increase gender inequalities, but it can be argued that women's long tradition of informal participation in the area of child care and schools may in this case stimulate their formal participation [11]. The debate about the interconnection between participation in the "small" and "big" democracy has a special relevance for women. Research has shown that there is gender equality in the small democracy, including user participation, participation in the local area and the work place, while men are more active than women in formal organisations and political parties (Andersen, et al, 1993).[12]

The temporary leave schemes

The most popular and innovative policies of the new Social Democratic-Centre government in power since January 1993 are without doubt the temporary leave of absence schemes. The schemes cover three areas: *education*, *child care*, and *sabbatical leave*. The main idea with these measures was for the employed person to use the leave opportunities and open up vacant jobs for the unemployed, for instance through job rotation and through a wider perspective of sharing work in society (Lind 1995;196).

The labour market reform of 1994 is a solidaristic strategy of work sharing combined with new elements of family policy. The objectives were primarily to increase the number of jobs for the unemployed, secondly to create a better-qualified work force through education, and finally to improve the quality of life for families with young children. The reform has been celebrated by critical scholars as an example of innovative policy, and feminist scholars have interpreted the leave scheme in relation to child care as an attempt to reconcile the problems for parents combining wage work and care for children (Olsen 1997).

Child care leave is offered to parents with children under 9 years of age for a period of 13 - 52 weeks. For parents with a child younger than one year the first 26 weeks is a legal right (13 weeks with a child over one year), and the employer is not entitled to dismiss the employee because of this leave. Longer periods of leave (up to 52 weeks) must be agreed to by the employer who has no obligation to re-employ the person after leave.

Educational leave is offered to persons over 25 years old and who are members of the unemployment insurance programme and have been employed for at least three years. The leave must be for at least one week and maximum 1 year (2 years for unemployed persons till 1996). After a revision in 1994, child care and educational leave was made permanent, and sabbatical leave continues till 1999 (Lind 1995). Parental and educational leave is a right whereas it is a precondition for sabbatical leave (allowed for a maximum of a year) that the employer accepts and that an unemployed person is employed as a substitute. The wage replacement rate for child care leave and sabbatical leave was 80 per cent of the unemployment benefit, but the level was reduced to 70 per cent in November 1994, and to 60 per cent in 1997. The wage replacement rate for educational leave is 100 per cent of the unemployment benefit[13].

The leave schemes have become popular among employed as well as unemployed workers, and especially among working mothers. The government estimated that 20.000 would accept the offers for leave during 1994, but at the end of 1994 50,845 applicants for leave were accepted. The number on leave rose to 82,116 persons in 1995, but it has declined a little again in 1996 to 62,990 persons, due to falling wage replacement rate. In 1994 and 1995 the majority applied for child care leave, but in 1996 31,412 applied for educational leave, compared to only 30,580 for child care leave. About 80 per cent of all persons on leave are women. About half the persons taking leave were employed, and most frequently from the public sector. In 57 per cent of the cases where leave takers were employed a substitute was employed (Lind 1995; 197, Lind 1997; table 7).

The unexpected popularity of the leave schemes with women workers is an indication that working mothers need a break in their work career and are willing to accept the consequence of a subsequent reduction in income. With the reduction of the unemployment rate, the leave schemes have increasingly come under attack from political forces on the Centre- Right, and they have also been questioned by individual members of the government. Their argument is that the schemes are no longer necessary because the rate of unemployment has been reduced (to about 8 per cent), that they are too costly, and that they serve as a subsidy to families and to the middle classes.

The main objection from the opposition is that these leaves do not stimulate economic growth, and they do not create 'real' jobs. The problem is that they have created 'bottle-necks', because the leave takers are concentrated in a few occupations. The two biggest groups who take the leave schemes are women employed in the public sector, especially nurses, teachers and social workers, and unemployed women. It is a further problem that the relatively large number of unemployed persons taking child care and educational leave has diminished the labour market effect of the schemes. For unemployed persons the leave schemes have provided an attractive alternative to the status of being unemployed.

The debate around the child care leave is a good illustration of the gap between gender neutral policies of the Danish welfare state and gender specific practices. The child care leave is an expansion of the social rights of parents which is gender neutral and had not been motivated by gender equality. The Equality Council warned that the leave would not attract fathers unless it had a better wage replacement rate and were to be made more flexible, and economists have recently warned that the gendered use of the schemes may constitute a barrier for women's equal pay. Feminist scholars are worried about the dangers of sexual segregation, because it is primarily women who use the leave schemes for child care. Going on leave has been interpreted as an individual strategy to solve the structural problems of combining waged work and care work which exacerbates the sexual division at the labour market (Olsen 1997).

The gendered use of the child care leave has provoked a debate about how to stimulate the participation of fathers in the leave schemes for child care. The Minister of Labour has proposed to make them more flexible, and feminist organisations want to reform the whole maternity/paternity leave scheme by increasing the wage replacement rate to make the schemes more attractive for fathers and by reserving part of the parental leave for men (Olsen 1997). The gendered use of the leave schemes can also be interpreted positively: It gives both employed, well-educated and unskilled, and unemployed women a break from waged work. This may stimulate a political identity connected to everyday life practice for those actively involved with the problems of everyday life (Bang & Sørensen 1997).

The discourse about "activation".

In the Danish welfare state, paid work has a normative value, and working mothers today have the highest activity rates of all women (Carlsen and Larsen 1994). This norm has till recently been coupled with relatively generous unemployment benefits, with long unemployment periods, generous replacement rates and relatively little control (Goul Andersen 1996). The discourse

about labour market participation, or as it is called 'activation' is directed towards the labour market, and it represents both a continuation of the active labour market policy and a break with earlier discourse. It is controversial, because it primarily stresses the duties of the unemployed in relation to paid work.

Two recent reports from 1995, the official report from the "welfare commission" and the report from the "alternative welfare commission", have opened the discussion about the *rights* and *duties* of marginalised and unemployed groups (Wealth and Welfare 1995). Both reports introduce a new language that contrasts a passive 'dependency culture', where citizens receive benefits from the state, with an active 'entrepreneurial culture' where individuals provide for themselves. The debate has till now focused predominantly upon the problems of marginalised men.

One group of economists, influenced by the Neo-liberal discourse, argues that the relatively generous unemployment benefits make the unemployed passive. From this perspective, it is suggested to strengthen the obligation to work and shorten the period for unemployment benefits. Critical social scientists have documented that in Denmark there has been no direct relation between the high unemployment rate of the 1980s and social and political marginalisation (Goul Andersen 1996). Goul Andersen has suggested that the relatively generous social welfare system has actually prevented the unemployed from becoming marginalised and is also the main reason why the majority of the unemployed has been capable of finding a job again with the expansion of the economy (Goul Andersen 1996).

The official objective of the new rules is to prevent marginalisation and enable unemployed, young people and persons on social assistance to become (re) integrated on the labour market. The unemployment period was reduced from 7 to 5 years and a right or duty to (re) education and training was introduced after 2 years of unemployment benefits. The Socialist People's Party, and a minority of Social Democrats, have described the 'active line' as a Danish form of "work-fare" that enforces control and reduces the rights of the unemployed. The special rules for the young (under 25) that oblige them to accept an educational offer after six months have been surprisingly successful (Lind 1997). The question, however, is whether all marginalised groups on long-term unemployment and on social assistance can be expected to find real jobs, or should rather learn to improve their quality of life?

The labour market debate is not gender specific, although women are generally more vulnerable to unemployment than men. Since 1977 women have had a higher unemployment rate than men (of about 3 per cent), and today women make up the largest per cent of the long-term unemployed (Goul Andersen 1996). During the 1980s women's unemployment reached the

political agenda, and labour market policies were targeted towards women. 'Women only' programmes and courses mushroomed for unskilled women, young women, immigrant women and single mothers based upon feminist pedagogy and new ideas. The new unemployment policies were based upon informal networks of women politicians, women administrators and feminist organisations (Dahlerup 1993;17). Women's unemployment rates were reduced, and women's part-time work has also been declining from 48 per cent (in 1978) to 21 per cent (in 1995).

There is no doubt that the solidaristic discourse has been favourable to women workers. The gender specific patterns in both public strategies and trade union initiatives towards the unemployed, and in individual experiences with unemployment, is one explanation why it has in many ways been easier to (re)integrate unskilled women than unskilled men (Andersen & Elm Larsen 1997). Investigations suggest that women may have better social resources to deal with unemployment and social changes than men have, and that male workers have been more ambivalent towards accepting untraditional jobs. One of the new issues in the political debate is the need to develop unemployment strategies inspired by feminism targeted explicitly towards unskilled men who are marginalised both in relation to the labour market and the family. For example by expanding experimental social projects as well as day high schools and other forms of adult education (Andersen & Elm Larsen 1997).

The Academic debate

Danish researchers in sociology and political science have, untill recently, not explicitly used the language of citizenship. There has been a relatively strong Marxist tradition among social scientists and feminists, which has been critical of the Social-Democratic welfare state and of the "rights discourse". From the late 1980s, critical scholars as well as welfare agents and activists have increasingly adopted the language of citizenship. And today, there is a growing debate about democratic citizenship and about the integration of marginalised groups [14] (Andersen, et al, 1993, Andersen & Torpe 1994, Mortensen 1995, Goul Andersen 1996).

The academic debate has illuminated contradictory principles behind the new language of citizenship: From the perspective of *democracy*, there is a potential conflict between the people's roles as users and citizens. Scholars inspired by neo-republican ideas have argued that the user role may stimulate a fragmented citizenship [partborgerskab] and may become a barrier for the development of the political roles as citizens. Others, inspired by feminist-communitarian ideas,

suggest that user participation is a potential for citizenship, because it is an expansion of the "small" democracy that is directly connected with the practices and problems of everyday life (Siim 1994b; Bang & Sørensen 1997).

From a feminist-communitarian perspective, the leave schemes can be interpreted as a solidaristic discourse of social rights that give the citizen-parents new possibilities to care for children and thus expand the caring dimension of the welfare state (Siim 1997). Feminist scholars have generally been positive towards the solidaristic strategy of wage sharing. The strong gender dimension in the use of the leave schemes has, however, together with their popularity among working mothers, raised critical questions about the dilemmas for women between waged work and care work, especially the time problems of working mothers (Siim 1997; Olsen 1997). The gendered labour market, with women predominantly employed in the public and men in the private sector, is a structural and cultural barrier for men's use of the leave schemes. Investigations of parental leave have shown that the main barriers for men's use of the leave are: a) financial reasons, in the sense that men on average have higher wages than women, and b) cultural attitudes, in the sense that employers and workers in private firms have a more negative attitude towards leave than employers and colleagues in the public sector[15]. From a perspective of gender equality, the leave arrangements need to be combined with policies that increase women's wages in the public sector and make the private sector more "family friendly".

Finally, the discourse about "activation" in relation to the labour market has been interpreted as a problematic break with the universal rights discourse and a shift toward a Danish version of "work-fare". Goul Andersen suggests that the Danish welfare system from the late 1970s to the mid 1990s was indeed very close to a 'citizen wage' system in the sense that everybody was offered a job or sufficient, rights-based public support. The 'active line' has moved away from this. It gives the unemployed rights to education and training, but at the same time it has increased the duties of the weakest group of citizens and does not guarantee real jobs (Goul Andersen 1997).

The future lines - problems and dilemmas

The academic interest in new forms of participation and integration has also stimulated a debate about women's citizenship (Andersen, et. al, 1993, Christensen 1994, Siim 1994). There is a growing interest in the political meaning of gender and in gender differences in political attitudes and practices toward the welfare state. Women have generally been more positive than men about the solidaristic discourse, which is close to the feminist strategy of combining waged work and

the family. And a small majority of women actually support a 'citizen wage', i.e. a universal right to a living wage for all citizens that would increase the choices of both women and men (Goul Andersen 1996). Results from the Danish investigation of citizenship show that in spite of a general tendency toward a homogenisation of gender differences in political values, there is still a gender difference in the political attitudes towards the welfare state. This is explained by a large gender gap in the values of young citizens: Young women tend to support social equality and social reforms connected with the welfare state to a higher degree than young men. And young men tend to be more critical towards social reforms and to support freedom of action to a higher degree than young women do (Christensen 1994). The gender differences in political identities of young citizens are remarkable, but it is a question whether young women can be expected to take over the old feminist strategies of increasing women's political power and their influence upon the future development of the welfare state.

During the last 20 years, the discourse of gender equality was based on an expansion of the welfare state and upon the integration of women on the labour market and active participation in politics. This strategy has been relatively successful, but it is challenged by parties on both the Left and the Right, as well as by young women. Young feminists, inspired by post-structuralism, are critical of the dominant strategy of gender equality "from above" that has increased the number of women in the political and economic elite without "changing the rules of the game". They emphasise *differences* between women and advocate a strategy of changing the gendered processes, organisations and institutions "from below" (Simonsen 1996). There is a growth in political participation connected with 'problems in everyday life', and case studies have made visible a new political identity and practice as hverdagsmagere [everyday actors] strongest among young citizens (Bang & Sørensen 1997). The recent debate points toward a need for a new vision of citizenship based on differences among citizens according to gender, generation, life situations and ethnicity.

Another challenge facing the Danish welfare state is connected with globalisation and growing immigration. The old vocabulary of universalism and social equality had been favourable to the integration of women, but it was based upon a high degree of homogeneity among citizens, which made it difficult to integrate difference based on ethnicity. I have suggested that it had been possible, during the last 20 years, to change a paternalist political culture based on the male norm and political discourses based on class alliances by creating a political consensus about gender equality. Today attitudes toward immigration have become a new central political conflict line that transcends the old Left/Right divide. One of the major

challenges for the social democratic discourse is therefore to develop new forms of solidarity that are able to integrate differences in the language of citizenship - a reflexive solidarity that expresses "support for the others in their difference" (Dean 1995).

Abstract

The language of citizenship has not untill recently been used explicitly in the political discourse or in the academic debate about the welfare state and democracy in Denmark. This article explores the connection between citizenship and the sub-vocabularies of social equality, universality and participation in the political discourse. It is suggested that during the 1990s new vocabularies of citizenship have been introduced, as well as a new framework of citizenship in the academic debate. The changes are discussed on the basis of three different cases: a) parent-citizens as users of service provision, b) the temporary leave schemes for citizen workers c) activation of workers. The new language is contradictory and contested. And it is an open question whether in the future we shall see a break with the former discourse of social equality and universality and an expansion of a more work-oriented welfare state, or a move toward a more solidaristic discourse that expands the principles behind the leave schemes. The article concludes by speculating about the future challenges for citizenship and the need to develop a new vision of equality and solidarity.

Notes

[1] In the Danish investigation of citizenship, we used the term political culture broadly as the orientation of citizens in political life, including the patterns of their attitudes, values and participation, as well as the meaning of routines, procedures and practices of political institutions (Andersen & Torpe 1994;7).

[2] Civil society must be understood in different national contexts. The Danish/Swedish word for community is close to the German notion of Gemeinschaft but in Scandinavia there is a close interconnection between the state, the family and the civil society (Hernes 1988), and in Denmark there has been a mix between welfare agents in civil society and local governments in the building of the welfare state (Kolstrup 1997). Jean Cohen's recent definition of civil society, inspired by Jürgen Habermas, as a third principle different from the market and the state, including the church and the family as well as political and cultural organisations, i.e. all contexts where there are communication (Cohen in Social kritik 1996;31), is close to the meaning given to civil society in Denmark.

[3] The Danish clergyman N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1872), who was the driving force behind the folk high school movement, and the Social Democrat Hal Koch (1904-1963), were two leading figures in this tradition.

[4] It is paradoxical that women in the Danish Social Democratic Party found it more difficult to organise and had less power than their Swedish and Norwegian counterparts (Christensen & Knopp 1996), because there was an independent organisation of unskilled women workers [Kvindeligt Arbejderforbund], unique for Denmark (Ravn 1996).

[5] Decentralisation has affected the majority of the social services, such as care for the elderly, nursery schools, child protection, sickness allowances, services to disabled people, the administration of public pensions and old age pensions, which are now the responsibility of 275 local governments. The health services, primary services as well as hospitals are administered by 14 regional governments (Rold Andersen 1993;111).

[6] The individualisation of family obligations means that a) parents have the obligation to provide for their children untill they are 18 and no longer, b) parents have the obligation to provide for and care for the children both when they are married or co-habiting (Koch-Nielsen 1996).

[7] The notion of a caring dimension of the welfare state that includes the right of individuals to receive and give care has been introduced in a recent article by Trudie Knijn and Monique Kremer as a dimension in comparative studies (1997).

[8] In Sweden we find a parallel increase in women's representation in the corporate channel. There the introduction of the principle of voluntary affirmative action in public administration has increased women's representation from between 15-18 per cent to around 30 to 40 per cent between 1986-1992 (Bergqvist 1994;195-200).

[9] The new governing bodies are composed of 5-7 representatives of parents, 2 representatives of teachers and 2 representatives of pupils, and 1 representative from the municipality if the board wants it. The municipality may delegate further competence to the individual schools, and so far the majority of schools have made use of this option (Torpe 1992).

[10] The Danish and Swedish investigations of citizenship *small* democracy was defined as citizens possibilities to influence their own situation and *big* democracy as citizens abilities to influence the situation of the whole country. Small democracy is a broader notion than local democracy in the sense that it includes participation as users in public institutions, participation in the local area and in the work place (Andersen, et al. 1993 and Siim 1994a).

[11] There is an interesting difference between Denmark and Sweden in relation to schools and child care institutions, and indeed in relation to the small democracy. The gender equality in the overall participation of parents in the areas of schools and nurseries in Denmark contrasts to Sweden, where women are more active than men in the small democracy (Siim 1994b).

[12] Two national research programmes, financed by the National Research Committee of the Social Sciences, are presently analysing the concept of citizenship and the dynamic between small and big democracy (GEP - the Research Programme of Gender Empowerment and Politics 1997, Bang & Sørensen 1997).

[13] Unemployment benefit is in Denmark 90 per cent of former wages with a relative low ceiling which is favorable to low income groups (Goul Andersen 1996). The reduction in the wage replacement rate for child care leave to 60 per cent is seen a problem for fathers and mothers in employment, because their wages are reduced (Olsen 1997).

[14] The research programme "Democratic Citizenship in Denmark" (1989-1994) was the first Danish project trying to develop a new concept of citizenship inspired by the ideas of T.H. Marshall as well as by Neo-republicanism. Presently the concept is employed by the "Centre for Integration and Differentiation" in Copenhagen (see Mortensen ed. 1995).

[15] Since 1984 men have had the right to paternity leave for 14 days and to part of the parental leave in the 15 - 24 week after the birth of a child. About half of the men take paternity leave while only about 10 per cent make use of the parental leave. The equality council has investigated why men do not use the parental leave. The main reasons are: a) financial reasons, b) opposition from the work place , i.e. cultural attitudes of employers and work mates, and c) cultural norms in the family giving women the primary responsibility for children (see Carlsen 1994).

References:

Andersen, J. & J. E. Larsen (1998) *Gender, Poverty and Empowerment*, in Critical Social Policy, vol. 18 (2): 241-258.

Andersen, J., AD. Christensen, K. Langberg, B. Siim and L. Torpe (1993) *Medborgerskab. Demokrati og politisk deltagelse*, (Citizenship, Democracy and Political Participation), Herning: Systime.

J. Andersen and L. Torpe eds. (1994) *Medborgerskab og politisk kultur* (Citizenship and Political Culture) Herning: Systime.

Andersen, B. Rold (1993) "The Nordic Welfare State under pressure: The Danish Experience" in *Policy and Politics*, vol.21, no. 2: 109-121.

Bang, H. & Sørensen E. (1997) Fra græsrødder til hverdagsmagere. Et studie i politisk identitet på indre Nørrebro (From Grass Roots to Everyday-actors. A Study in Political identity), Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration: Aalborg University.

Bergquist, C. (1994) *Mäns makt och kvinnors intressen* (Men's Power and Women's Interests), Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.

Borchorst, A. (1997) *State of Art Study of Research on Women in Political Decision-making*, GEP Working Paper no 2, Aalborg University.

Carlsen. S. (1994) "Men's Utilization of Paternity Leave and Parental Leave Schemes" in Carlsen, S. & Larsen J.E. (eds.) (1994)", *The Equality Dilemma. Reconciling Working Life and Family Life, Viewed from an Equality Perspective - the Danish example*, Munksgård: Copenhagen.

Carlsen, S. & Larsen J.E. (eds.) (1994) "Introduction", *The Equality Dilemma. Reconciling Working Life and Family Life, Viewed from an Equality Perspective - the Danish example*, Munksgård: Copenhagen.

Christensen, A.D. (1994) "Køn, ungdom og værdiopbrud" (Gender, Youth and Valuechanges) in J. Andersen and L. Torpe (eds) *Medborgerskab og politisk kultur (Citizenship and Political Culture)*:175-210. Herning:Systime.

Christensen, A.D. & P. Knopp (1997) *Kvinder og politisk repræsentation*, (Women and Political Representation), GEP working paper, Aalborg University.

Dahlerup, D. (1979)"Kvinders organisering i det danske socialdemokrati 1908-1969" (Women's Organisation in the Danish Social Democratic Party 1909-1969) *in Meddelelser om forskning i arbejderbevægelsens historie* nr. 13, 1979: 5-35.

Dahlerup D. (1993) "From Movement protest to State Feminism: The Women's Liberation Movement and Unemployment Policies in Denmark" in *NORA, Nordic Journal of Women's Studies,* no 1, 1993: 4-20.

Dean, J. (1995) "Reflective Solidarity" in *Constellations,* vol.2 no.1: 114-140.

Esping-Andersen (1985) *Politics Against Markets,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Finneman, N.O. (1985*) I broderskabets ånd. Den social- demokratiske arbejderbevægelse idéhistorie 1871-1977,* (In the Name of Brotherhood. The Ideas of the Social- democratic Labour Movement 1871-1977) København: Gyldendal.

Goul Andersen, J. (1996) Marginalization, Citizenship and The Economy: The Capacities of the Universalist Welfare State in Denmark, Dep. of Economic, Politics and Public Administration, 1996:1 , forthcoming in Eriksen E. & Loftager, J. (eds.) *The Rationality of the Welfare State*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Goul Andersen, J. (1997) *Beyond Retrenchment: Welfare Policies in Denmark in the 1990s*, ECPR Round-table on "The Survival of the Welfare State", Dep. of Economics, Politics and Public Administration: Aalborg University.

Hernes, Helga (1988) "Scandinavian Citizenship" in *Acta Sociologica*, vol. 31 nr. 3: 199-215

Jensen, J. J. (1994) Public Child Care in an Equality Perspective in Carlsen, S. & Larsen, J.E. (eds) *op. cit.:* 103-117.

Hoff, J. (1993) "Medborgerskab, brugerrolle og magt" (Citizenship, Userrole and Power) in Andersen, J. AD. Christensen, K. Langberg, B. Siim og L.Torpe (1993): *op.cit:* 75-107.

Koch-Nielsen, I. (1996) *Family Obligations in Denmark*, The Danish National Institute for Social Research: Copenhagen, 96:3.

Knijn, T. & Kremer, M. (1997*)* "Gender and the Caring Dimension of Welfare States: Towards Inclusive Citizenship": 328-362 in *Social Politics. International Studies in Gender State and Society,* vol. 4 no.3.

Kolstrup, S. (1997) "Fra kommunesocialisme til velfærdsstat" (From Municipal-Socialism to the welfare state) in *Social Kritik* nr. 49, 1997: 5-21.

Lind, J. (1995)"Unemployment Policy and Social Integration" *in Social Integration and Marginalization,* København: Samfundslitteratur.

Lind, J. (1997) The social benefits and deficits of flexibility: Unemployment and non-standard work, paper, Aalborg: University of Aalborg.

Mortensen, N. ed. (1995) *Social Integration and Marginalization,* København: Samfundslitteratur.

Nyseth, T. & Torpe, L. (1997) "Borgerstyre eller brugerstyre? - Institutionelle nydannelser i et demokratiperspektiv": 235-265 in P. Gundelach, H. Jørgensen & K.K. Klausen (red.) *Det lokale. Decentral politik og forvaltning,* Institut for Politik, Økonomi og Forvaltning: Aalborg University,

Olsen, M. (1997) "Orlov til børnepasning en familiepolitisk revolution?" (Leave to Child Care a Revolution in Family Policy?): 40-56 in *Kvinder, Køn og Forskning* no.2/97.

Ravn, A.B. *The Discourses of Gender and Work. The Danish Case*, Paper to the First German-Nordic Conference on Gender History, Stockholm 21-24, 1996.

Siim, B. (1988) "Towards a Feminist Rethinking of the Welfare State":160-187 in Kathy Jones and Anna Jonasdottir eds., *The Political Interests of Women. Developing Theory and Research with a Feminist Face*, London: Sage Pub.

--------- (1994a) "Engendering Democracy - the interplay between Citizenship and Political Participation" in *Social Politics. International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, vol. 1 no 3, 1994: 286-306.

--------- (1994b) "Køn, medborgerskab og politisk kultur" (Gender, Citizenship and Political Culture) in J. Andersen and L. Torpe eds. (1994): op.cit.:125-159

--------- (1997) "The Dilemmas of Citizenship in Denmark: Lone mothers between work and care" in J. Lewis ed. *Lone Mothers in European Welfare Regimes*, London: Jessica Kingsley Pub.: 140-171.

Simonsen, D.G. (1996) Som et stykke vådt sæbe mellem fedtede fingre (As a piece of wet soap between slippery fingers): 29-51 in *Kvinder, Køn og Forskning no.2.*

Social Kritik (1994) Interview with Jean Cohen by Øjvind Larsen, no. 29: 29-34.

Torpe, L. (1992) *Citizen Involvement in Serviceprovision*, paper presented at the ECPR Joint Session of Workshops 1992.

Velstand og velfærd - en analysesammenfatning, (Wealth and Welfare- a summary), Kommisionen om fremtidens beskæftigelse og erhvervsmuligheder, Copenhagen, maj 1995.

Østergård, U. (1992) *Europas ansigter. Nationale stater i en ny og gammel verden*, (The Faces of Europe. National States in a new and old world) København: Rosinante.

PUBLICATIONS IN GEP WORKING PAPER SERIES:

1. John Andersen, Anette Borchorst, Ann-Dorte Christensen, Drude Dahlerup, Jørgen Elm Larsen and Birte Siim: *Project Outline. Gender, Democracy and Welfare States in Transition*, Aalborg University, 1997.

2. Anette Borchorst: *State of the Art. Study of Research on Women in Political Decision-Making. Report on Denmark*, Aalborg University, 1997.

3. Birte Siim and Ann-Dorte Christensen: *Medborgerskab og politisk kultur*. Reprint of articles from Ann-Dorte Christensen et al. (red.) *Det kønnede samfund. Forståelser af køn og social forandring*, Aalborg University Press, 1997. (Sold internally at Aalborg University only).

4. Birte Siim: *Towards a Gender Sensitive Framework for Citizenship - Implications for Comparative Studies of Welfare States in Transition*, Aalborg University, 1998. Jet Bussemaker (ed.): *Citizenship and Transition of European Welfare States*, forthcoming, New York/London, Routledge.

5. Anette Borchorst, Ann-Dorte Christensen and Birte Siim: *Køn, demokrati og repræsentation - genoptryk af fire anmeldelser*, Aalborg University, 1998. Reprint of four reviews.

6. Birte Siim: *Vocabularies of Citizenship and Gender: The Danish Case*, Aalborg University, 1998.
Preprint from Critical Social Policy. A Journal of Theory and Practice in Social Welfare. Vol. 18, issue 56, Sage Publications, 1998.

The GEP WORKING PAPERS can be bought from:
SECRETARIAT
GEP - THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME GENDER, EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICS
Joan Vuust, Aalborg University, Fibigerstraede 2, 9220 Aalborg Oest, Denmark
Phone: +45 96 35 80 80, Fax: +45 98 15 32 98, E-mail: joan@i4.auc.dk

GEP - The Research Programme Gender, Empowerment and Politics

The Research Programme Gender, Empowerment and Politics (GEP) deals with the changing political importance of gender in modern societies. During the last 30 years, women have moved from a position of political powerlessness to political presence and influence in the Danish democracy. Women's new role in politics has had deepgoing consequences - not only for women but also for men.

The aim of the programme is to analyse the interplay between gender relations and discources of gender on the one hand and changes in the European welfare states and models of democracy on the other. The basic hypothesis is that politics is a determining factor for the construction of gender - and conversely that gender relations influence the political discourses and the political institutions. From this double assumption, new questions concerning the interconnection between civil, political, and social citizenship are analysed.

The programme emphasises two factors: First analysing processes and patterns behind the double tendencies toward empowerment and social exclusion of social groups in terms of gender and class. Secondly, the differentiation within the group of women and men analysing the interplay between gender and class. Maintaining the perspective of gender, these differentiations will make visible the differences of generations as well as the differences between the educated/employed and the marginalized groups.

Questions connected with public equality politics, the increasing representation of women, women's participation in the local political communities and the political elite, as well as strategies against marginalization and poverty will be discussed through projects and case studies.

The project is carried out by six scientists from four different institutions.

JOHN ANDERSEN
Department of Social Sciences
Building 23.1., PO 260
Roskilde University
DK-4000 Roskilde
Phone: +45 46 75 77 11
Fax: +45 46 75 66 18
E-mail: johna@ruc.dk

ANETTE BORCHORST
Department of Political Science
Aarhus University
Universitetsparken
DK-8000 Aarhus C
Phone: +45 89 42 11 33
Fax: +45 86 13 98 39
E-mail: ab@ps.au.dk

ANN-DORTE CHRISTENSEN
FREIA - Feminist Research Center
Aalborg University
Fibigerstraede 2
DK-9220 Aalborg Oest
Phone: +45 96 35 80 80
Fax: +45 98 15 32 98
E-mail: adc@i4.auc.dk

DRUDE DAHLERUP
Statsvetenskapliga Institutionen
Stockholm University
S-1 06 91 Stockholm
Sverige
Phone: +46 (0)8 16 49 65
Fax: +46 (0)8 15 25 29
E-mail: drude.dahlerup@statsvet.su.se

JØRGEN ELM LARSEN
Department of Sociology
Copenhagen University
Linnésgade 22
DK-1361 Copenhagen K
Phone: +45 35 32 32 80
Fax: +45 35 32 39 40
E-mail: Joergen.Elm.Larsen@sociology.ku.dk

BIRTE SIIM *(COORDINATOR)*
FREIA - Feminist Research Center
Aalborg University
Fibigerstraede 2
DK-9220 Aalborg Oest
Phone: +45 96 35 80 80
Fax: +45 98 15 32 98
E-mail: siim@i4.auc.dk

PERNILLE T. ANDERSEN
(PH.D.-STUDENT)
Dept. of Development and Planning
Aalborg University
Fibigerstraede 2
DK-9220 Aalborg Oest
Phone: +45 96 35 80 80
Fax: +45 98 15 32 98
pernillea@i4.auc.dk

JENS ULRICH
(PH.D.-STUDENT)
Dept. of Development and Planning
Aalborg University
Fibigerstraede 2
DK-9220 Aalborg Oest
Phone: +45 96 35 80 80
Fax: +45 98 15 32 98
E-mail: ulrich@i4.auc.dk

GERDA THORSAGER
(PH.D.-STUDENT)
Department of Sociology
Copenhagen University
Linnésgade 22
DK-1361 Copenhagen K
Phone: +45 35 32 39 45
Fax: +45 35 32 39 40
E-mail: gerda.thorsager@sociology.ku.dk

SECRETARIAT